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1333 Graduate at UMaine's 196th Commencement

May 20, 2000

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ORONO -- Comfortable temperatures, a soft breeze and a cloudless sky graced the University of Maine's 196th Commencement ceremony, held this morning on Morse Field at Harold Alfond Stadium on campus.

Today's event marked the first time since 1994 that at UMaine class has graduated at a single outdoor ceremony. This week's installation of portable flooring over the turf surface on the 20-month-old athletic field, along with near-perfect weather, made it possible for a return to the traditional UMaine Spring Commencement venue.

Of the 1,333 people who graduated today, 327 received graduate degrees -- 28 of them at the doctoral level.

Margaret Katherine Jellison, a music education major from Dedham, was honored at today's ceremony as the valedictorian of the UMaine Class of 2000. Three women -- Calah Tenney of Palmyra, who earned degrees in biochemistry and molecular and cellular biology; Susan Pellerin, an elementary education major from Monroe; and Hollie Gowen, a journalism major from York -- share the title of salutatorian.

Today's Commencement speaker was Maine author Cathie Pelletier, whose acclaimed novels include "The Funeral Makers," "Once Upon a Time on the Banks" and "The Weight of Winter." In the citation that went with today's award of an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree, UMaine President Peter Hoff noted that "through her dry and sometimes biting humor, her captivating story-telling and her fascinating cast of characters, Cathie Pelletier has established herself as another of Maine's literary treasures."

An Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters was also awarded to retired Dartmouth College Prof. Ashely Bryan, a writer, poet, painter, craftsman, illustrator and educator who has lived on Little Cranberry Island since 1979. "Ashley Bryan is the very model of a Renaissance man -- alive with the love and practice of the arts and letters; committed to raising awareness of the issues and opportunities that build and enrich society; and dedicated to a lifetime of learning and teaching the visions that bring joy to people and brighten the world," Hoff said in the degree citation.

Today's ceremony also featured a Celebration of Academia address delivered by UMaine Philosophy Prof. Douglas Allen, the 2000 winner of the University's Distinguished Maine Professor Award. Four of Allen's faculty colleagues who also won annual faculty honors were recognized at today's ceremony. They are Owen Smith of the art faculty, winner of the Presidential Teaching Award; Rosemary Bamford and Janice Kristo of the education faculty, who shared the Presidential Research and Creative Achievement Award; and Walter McIntire of the education faculty, who received the Presidential Public Service Award.

Barry McCrum of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees brought greetings from the board. The new graduates were welcomed to the ranks of UMaine alumni by Gregory Jamison, chair of the University of Maine's General Alumni Association.